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Synopsis and Characters

[image]

Luciana, a four-month-old baby girl with green eyes and light brown hair, is kidnapped and horrifically abused by a terrible couple. Hidden away in a closet and left to suffer, her life takes a drastic turn when Lorenzo D'Angelo, a powerful Italian mafia boss, arrives at the couple's home to collect a debt. Instead of money, Lorenzo discovers Luciana crammed inside a box, abandoned and broken. Moved by an unexpected sense of compassion, Lorenzo rescues her and takes her back to his home.

Lorenzo's wife, Alessia, and their five sons—Nico, Xander, Leo, and twins Mason and Cassio—embrace Luciana as one of their own, determined to protect her from the horrors she has endured. In the D'Angelo family, Luciana finds the safety and love she never had, but the dangers of the mafia world still loom. As Lorenzo and his family raise Luciana, they must navigate the threats surrounding them while shielding her from a dark and perilous world.

The D'Angelos will stop at nothing to keep Luciana safe, even as their enemies close in, threatening to tear apart the family they've worked so hard to build.

Luciana Marie D'Angelo (Princesa)

[image]

Lorenzo D 'Angelo (Don of the Italian Mafia)

[image]

Alessia D'Angelo (Donna of the Italian Mafia)

[image]

Nicholas D'Angelo (Underboss)

[image]

Alexander D'Angelo (Consigliere)

[image]

Leonardo D'Angelo (Capo)

Mason D'Angelo

[image]

Cassio D'Angelo

[image]

The Debt

[image]

Lorenzo D'Angelo had never felt fear—not in the conventional sense, at least. A man of his stature and power, with hazel eyes that could cut through the toughest of men, had no reason to fear anything. His presence alone, towering at 6'6", was enough to make others tremble. But as he stood outside a decrepit house on the outskirts of Naples, something gnawed at him.

Something darker than usual.

Rocco, his ever-loyal second-in-command, glanced at him. "Boss, you sure about this? Small-time scum like them... it's not worth your time."

Lorenzo's jaw clenched. The couple inside had owed him for too long, and something about today felt... off. "I'll handle it. Wait here."

Rocco nodded, though his gaze lingered in concern as Lorenzo moved toward the door. The house was a wreck, a reflection of the lives within—cracked windows, peeling paint, a stench that wafted through the cracks. Lorenzo's knuckles rapped sharply on the door, and within seconds, a frail woman appeared. Her eyes widened in terror the moment she saw him.

"Mr. D'Angelo," she whispered, her voice shaking as if the words themselves hurt her throat. "Please... just a little more time."

"You've had enough time," Lorenzo said, his voice cold. He pushed past her with ease, stepping into the squalor of the house. The man, her partner, stood in the corner, shaking, avoiding eye contact. "Where's my money?"

The man stammered, "We don't have it. I swear, we just need a little more—"

Lorenzo wasn't listening. His eyes had already shifted to a closet in the corner of the room, its door slightly ajar. From within, he could hear it—something faint. A small, trembling whimper. He moved toward the closet, ignoring the couple's frantic protests. The woman grabbed his arm, desperate to stop him, but Lorenzo shoved her away with such force that she stumbled backward.

"Please, don't!" the man cried out, but it was too late. Lorenzo yanked the closet door open, revealing a sight that made even him pause.

Inside the cramped, filthy space, crammed into a small cardboard box, was a baby girl. She was tiny, no more than four months old, with matted light brown hair and piercing green eyes that were clouded with fear and pain. Her body was unnaturally still, her breathing shallow. Bruises, cuts, and dirt marred her fragile skin, and her cries were weak, as if she had learned long ago that crying wouldn't help.

Lorenzo's chest tightened. He wasn't a man given to softness, but what he saw in front of him was no longer just a debt. It was cruelty beyond comprehension. He knelt down, his large hands surprisingly gentle as he lifted the tiny girl from the box. She flinched at his touch, her body trembling violently as if expecting more pain.

The woman behind him sobbed, "We... we didn't mean to... we just found her. We couldn't afford to feed her."

Lorenzo's hazel eyes darkened. "Found her?"

The man was shaking, backing away, his cowardice clear. "We... we stole her. She was—she was just left alone, and we thought—"

Lorenzo's grip tightened on the baby, holding her closer to his chest, as a red-hot fury boiled inside him. Stolen. Abused. Forgotten. This wasn't a mistake or an accident. This was deliberate cruelty.

He stood, the baby cradled protectively against his chest. She was light—too light—her small frame so fragile it felt like she could break at any moment. Her green eyes looked up at him, wide with

fear, but she was too weak to even cry.

"You'll pay for this," Lorenzo said, his voice deadly calm. He turned to Rocco, who had just stepped inside. "Take her to the car. Gently."

Rocco's eyes widened at the sight of the baby, but he knew better than to question Lorenzo in the moment. He carefully took the tiny bundle from Lorenzo, wrapping her in the boss's expensive jacket to shield her from the cold. Her fear was palpable—her small body trembled as she was transferred to Rocco's arms, and her whimpers grew more frantic.

Lorenzo turned his back on the baby and walked toward the couple, who were now cowering in the corner. "You stole her. You let her rot." His voice was low, seething with fury. "You don't deserve mercy."

Without hesitation, he pulled his gun from his coat, aiming it squarely at the man's head. "This is for her," he said coldly, and pulled the trigger.

The sound of the gunshot reverberated through the small house. The woman let out a strangled scream as the man crumpled to the floor, lifeless. Lorenzo didn't flinch, his expression cold and unyielding. He turned his gaze to the woman, who was now sobbing uncontrollably.

Rocco reappeared in the doorway, the baby still bundled in his arms. "Boss?"

"Finish it," Lorenzo said without looking back.

Rocco didn't hesitate. A second gunshot rang out, and the house fell into silence. Lorenzo holstered his gun and walked toward the door. There was no satisfaction in killing these scum—only a grim necessity. As far as he was concerned, their lives had ended the moment they stole that child and left her to suffer.

In the car, Lorenzo slid into the back seat beside Luciana. She was still shaking, her green eyes wide with fear, staring at him as though expecting him to be the next monster in her life.

"Let's get out of here," Lorenzo ordered Rocco, his voice low as the car pulled away from the house of horrors.

The ride to the airport was quiet, save for the occasional whimper from the baby. Lorenzo's thoughts were racing, but every time his eyes met hers, something strange stirred in his chest. He couldn't name it, but he knew one thing: this child needed more than just protection. She needed care—something Lorenzo hadn't given to anyone outside his family in years.

When they arrived at the private airport, Lorenzo carried the baby with him to his jet. The flight attendant's eyes widened in surprise, but she wisely said nothing, offering only a soft blanket and a bottle.

Once they were in the air, Lorenzo unwrapped the baby from his jacket and laid her carefully on the seat beside him. Her tiny body was stiff, and she recoiled when he reached for her. The fear in her eyes was unmistakable—she didn't trust him. Didn't trust anyone.

"Shhh," Lorenzo murmured, his voice softer than it had been in years. He ran a hand gently through her hair, but even that made her flinch. His jaw tightened, and his gaze darkened with fury—not at her, but at what had been done to her.

She needed a bath. He could see the dirt and blood smeared across her skin. Lorenzo carried her to the small bathroom at the back of the jet, filling the sink with warm water. Her eyes darted around the space, her small hands trembling as he gently removed her filthy clothes. She cried out, her tiny voice hoarse, when he lowered her into the water, as if expecting the bath to be another form of punishment.

He saw then the extent of her injuries—cuts, bruises, and scars that no child should have. Lorenzo's hands clenched into fists as he washed her gently, his fury boiling beneath the surface. Every bruise he found, every small whimper she made, only added to the fire burning in his chest.

"They'll never hurt you again," he vowed quietly, his voice laced with deadly promise.

After the bath, he wrapped her in a soft towel, holding her close to his chest as she trembled against him. She was hungry, her small lips searching for sustenance. The flight attendant had prepared a bottle, and Lorenzo held it to her mouth, watching as she drank in desperate gulps.

Her green eyes never left his, wide with fear and uncertainty, but there was something else—something like hope—buried deep within them. Lorenzo had never felt this kind of responsibility before, this fierce need to protect.

As the plane soared through the night sky, Lorenzo sat with Luciana in his arms, her small body slowly relaxing against his chest. His fury hadn't subsided. If anything, it had grown. But now, it was tempered with a singular focus: to ensure that no one ever laid a hand on her again.

Luciana was his now. And anyone who dared threaten her would face the wrath of a man who had built an empire on fear.

The Flight Home

[image]

The hum of the jet's engines filled the cabin, a low, constant sound that usually brought Lorenzo a sense of control, a reminder that he ruled the skies just as much as the streets below. But tonight, something different filled the air—a small, fragile life cradled in his arms. Luciana. The name echoed in his mind as he held the tiny girl against his chest. She was still so afraid, trembling slightly, but there was a flicker of trust in her wide green eyes.

As the jet sliced through the night sky, Lorenzo sat in silence, his large hands cradling Luciana as gently as he could. It wasn't a strange feeling, this protective instinct. It was one he hadn't felt in a long time—ever since his boys had grown up. Each of his five sons had been cradled in these arms once, but never had he held a daughter. He had never known what it would feel like to hold a baby girl, a princess to spoil and protect. Now, that long-buried feeling stirred deep within him, pulling him toward her with a gentleness he thought he had left behind.

Luciana, for all her fear, seemed to be slowly adjusting to the new warmth surrounding her. She was no longer stiff with terror, though every creak of the plane or passing shadow still made her flinch. But with each passing minute, she seemed to settle deeper against him. Her small hand, barely the size of his thumb, clutched at his shirt as though afraid he might disappear.

Lorenzo's hazel eyes softened as he looked down at her. She was so fragile, so breakable, and yet there was a spark of strength in her, even if it was hidden beneath layers of trauma. He gently ran a hand through her light brown hair, careful not to wake her. She stirred at his touch but didn't pull away. In fact, she snuggled closer to him, her little body seeking the warmth and safety he offered.

The flight attendant approached cautiously, her gaze flicking from Lorenzo to the tiny bundle in his arms. But Luciana, sensing someone else nearby, immediately tensed. Her little eyes snapped

open, wide with panic. She whimpered softly, turning her face into Lorenzo's chest, trying to hide.

"Stay back," Lorenzo ordered, his voice low but firm. His eyes never left Luciana as he tightened his arms around her protectively. The last thing he wanted was to scare her again.

The flight attendant nodded and quickly stepped away. Lorenzo could feel Luciana's rapid heartbeat against his chest, the panic still lingering just beneath the surface. He whispered to her softly, his voice gentler than anyone in his world would ever hear. "It's okay, bambina. No one will hurt you."

His words seemed to calm her. Slowly, her breathing returned to a steady rhythm, and her little hand once again found his shirt, clutching it as if to ground herself. He could feel the trust building between them—a fragile, delicate thing, but real nonetheless.

As the hours passed, Luciana began to drift off into a deeper sleep. Lorenzo held her close, his mind wandering. He thought of his sons —Nico, Xander, Leo, Mason, Cassio—and how quickly they had grown from boys to men. They had been strong, even as babies, with the same fire in their eyes that still burned today. But this little girl was different. She wasn't a fighter yet. She was vulnerable, delicate in ways his boys never were.

And Lorenzo realized, with a pang, that he had never had the chance to care for a baby girl. He had always wondered what it would be like to have a daughter, someone to spoil, to protect from the world's dangers. Now, holding Luciana, that long-buried desire returned. She would be his princess. She would be protected from every shadow, every threat, and anyone who dared harm her would face a reckoning they could never imagine.

The jet began its descent, the sky outside shifting from deep black to the faint glow of dawn. Naples lay below, its streets quiet in the early morning. The D'Angelo estate loomed in the distance, but Lorenzo's focus remained on Luciana. He barely noticed the plane touching down or the murmured words from the crew. His world, at this moment, was the tiny life sleeping in his arms.

Rocco was waiting at the bottom of the stairs when Lorenzo stepped off the plane. He glanced at the boss, then at the baby in his arms, but said nothing. Rocco had seen Lorenzo in countless situations, from business dealings to bloodshed, but this was different. Lorenzo, the feared mafia boss, looked down at the sleeping baby in his arms with something Rocco hadn't seen in years—gentleness.

"Everything's ready," Rocco said quietly, though his eyes flicked curiously to Luciana. "Boss, you want me to—"

"No," Lorenzo interrupted, his voice soft but firm. "I'll carry her."

Without another word, they walked toward the waiting car. Luciana stirred slightly as they drove, her small hand reaching for him even in sleep, as if needing the reassurance that he was still there. Lorenzo held her close, his heart tightening at the thought of what this little girl had gone through. Her fear of everyone but him was still evident, her wariness of the world around her lingering in every tiny movement.

As they approached the gates of the D'Angelo estate, Lorenzo's gaze lifted toward the mansion. His family was waiting inside—Alessia, his wife, and their five sons. How would they react to this sudden addition to their world? A baby girl, scarred and frightened, thrust into their lives.

But none of that mattered right now. What mattered was that Luciana was safe. She was his now, and nothing—not the dangers of his life or the cold, brutal world he ruled—would ever touch her again.

Lorenzo looked down at her sleeping face, his hand resting protectively over her tiny body. She had found her place, nestled against him, and he knew in that moment that she had become a part of him, a part of his family, in ways he hadn't expected. She was his princess now, and the world would bend to keep her safe.

Coming Home

[image]

As Lorenzo approached the grand entrance of the D'Angelo estate, a mix of anticipation and trepidation filled him. He hadn't prepared Alessia for this. How could he explain the fragile life he now carried in his arms? Luciana was a child—no, a baby—who had endured unimaginable horrors, and Lorenzo was about to introduce her to the world he had built.

The massive double doors swung open, revealing the warm glow of the mansion's interior. Alessia stood just inside, her blue eyes sparkling with curiosity, her blonde hair cascading over her shoulders. She wore a soft, welcoming smile that had always charmed him. But as he stepped inside, her expression shifted from joy to concern.

"Lorenzo, you're back," she said, her voice laced with affection and a hint of worry. "What's—"

Then she saw Luciana. The baby nestled against Lorenzo's chest, wrapped in the softest blanket, her small face peeking out. Alessia's breath caught in her throat.

"Oh, mio Dio," she whispered, stepping closer. "Who is she?"

Luciana stirred at the sudden shift in her surroundings, letting out a soft whimper before tucking her face deeper into Lorenzo's chest. Her tiny fingers flexed instinctively, grasping at the fabric of his shirt.

"She's been through a lot," Lorenzo said, his voice quieter now. "She was kidnapped, mistreated. I found her hidden away." The weight of his words settled heavily between them.

Alessia's heart ached as she took another step forward, her gaze fixed on the small, fragile bundle in Lorenzo's arms. "Oh, my poor darling," she murmured, keeping her voice soft. "She's just a baby."

Luciana shivered slightly, her body still tense. At four months old, she wasn't old enough to recognize faces, but she sensed the shift in environment, the unfamiliar voice, and her first instinct was to curl closer into the warmth and safety of the arms holding her.

"Lorenzo, she's scared," Alessia said gently, her maternal instincts flaring. "She doesn't know anything but fear."

"I know," Lorenzo murmured, adjusting his hold, trying to shield her from the overwhelming newness of her surroundings.

Alessia hesitated, then slowly extended a hand, keeping her movements careful. "Luciana, sweet girl, you're safe now," she whispered. "I promise."

Luciana didn't react beyond another whimper, pressing her tiny face into Lorenzo's chest as if she could disappear into him. Alessia exhaled softly, nodding in understanding.

"She only knows you right now," she said. "She's going to need time."

Lorenzo nodded, carefully sitting down on the couch with Luciana still curled against him. Alessia sat beside him, her gaze never leaving the baby.

"I wasn't expecting this," she admitted, her voice barely above a whisper.

"Neither was I," Lorenzo confessed. "But the moment I saw her, I knew I couldn't leave her behind."

Alessia reached out, ever so lightly tracing a finger over the edge of the blanket that wrapped around Luciana. The baby's breathing was still uneven, her little body tense, but she wasn't crying. That, at least, was something.

"She's perfect," Alessia said softly, emotion thick in her voice.

Lorenzo's gaze remained on the tiny girl in his arms, her green eyes barely visible as she peeked out, her expression wary even in her drowsiness.

"She's ours now," he said. "And no one will ever hurt her again."

As the words settled between them, Luciana let out a small sigh, her tiny fingers finally relaxing against Lorenzo's chest.

It was the first sign of trust. A small step toward healing.

And in that moment, Alessia knew—this little girl had already stolen her heart.

Oh Brother

[image]

Before Lorenzo could respond to Alessia, the sound of footsteps echoed through the hallway. He turned just as his five sons appeared, their faces filled with curiosity about their father's return.

Nico, the eldest at 23, stood tall at 6'5", with dark brown hair and piercing blue eyes. His presence commanded respect, and he had a protective aura that radiated from him. Next to him was Xander, 21, who was slightly shorter at 6'4" but no less imposing, with sleek black hair and hazel eyes that glimmered with intelligence. Behind them was Leo, 20, who had a warm smile and the same dark brown hair and blue eyes as Nico.

The twins, Mason and Cassio, both 19, were the youngest. They shared light brown hair and hazel eyes, and their playful energy always filled the room. As they walked in, Lorenzo felt a surge of pride for his sons, knowing they were all strong and capable young men.

"Dad!" Nico exclaimed, his voice booming with enthusiasm. "You're back! Did you—"

But his words trailed off as his gaze landed on Luciana, who was still nestled securely in Lorenzo's arms. The room fell silent as the brothers took in the sight of the small girl, wide-eyed and clinging tightly to their father.

"Who is she?" Xander asked, his voice gentle as he stepped forward, eyes softening as he regarded the baby.

"This is Luciana," Lorenzo said, his heart swelling as he introduced her. "I found her. She was kidnapped and mistreated by a couple." His voice wavered slightly, the weight of the situation pressing heavily on him.

The brothers exchanged glances, their expressions shifting from

curiosity to concern. "Oh, damn," Leo breathed, his voice barely above a whisper. "What happened to her?"

"She's scared," Alessia added, noticing Luciana's tension as the boys approached. "We're trying to help her feel safe."

As if sensing the brothers' presence, Luciana's grip tightened around Lorenzo's shirt. She pressed her face against his chest, her little body trembling slightly. Lorenzo felt a pang in his chest, knowing how much fear she still carried.

"Hey there, little one," Nico said softly, kneeling down to her eye level. "You're safe here with us. We're your family now." He offered a gentle smile, trying to reassure her, but Luciana peeked at him cautiously, her wide green eyes reflecting uncertainty.

Xander stepped closer, his demeanor calm and soothing. "You're going to love it here, Luciana. We have a playroom filled with toys and all sorts of fun stuff. We can't wait to show you," he said, his voice warm and inviting.

Mason and Cassio hovered behind their older brothers, their expressions filled with a mixture of excitement and empathy. "We'll take good care of you," Mason added, his voice gentle. "You can play with us anytime."

Luciana's small fingers clutched at Lorenzo's shirt, and he could feel her fear. "It's okay, Luciana," he murmured, looking down at her. "They're just saying hello. They're going to love you."

"Can we hold her?" Cassio asked, his eyes sparkling with eagerness. "I promise I'll be super gentle."

Lorenzo hesitated for a moment, his protective instincts flaring. But he could see the genuine affection in his sons' eyes. They wanted to help Luciana feel safe and loved, just as he did.

"Alright," he said finally, gently shifting Luciana in his arms. "But take it slow. She needs time to get used to you."

With great care, Lorenzo handed Luciana to Nico, who cradled her as if she were the most precious thing in the world. "Hey there,

little princess," Nico cooed, his voice soft and reassuring. "You're safe with me. I've got you."

Luciana's eyes widened, and for a moment, she looked between Lorenzo and Nico, uncertainty still written on her face. But something in Nico's demeanor seemed to ease her anxiety, and she relaxed ever so slightly in his arms.

Xander leaned closer, his voice gentle. "You're doing great, Luciana. Just look at all of us. We're here for you."

As the brothers took turns holding Luciana, she began to warm up to them. Though still wary, the softness of their voices and the genuine affection in their eyes started to chip away at her fear. With each passing moment, Lorenzo felt a flicker of hope that she would come to see them as family.

"I can't wait to play with you," Leo said, grinning as he gently brushed his finger against Luciana's tiny hand. "We have so many games to show you."

Finally, Alessia moved closer, her heart aching for the little girl. "May I hold her?" she asked softly, her voice full of warmth and kindness.

Lorenzo exchanged a glance with his wife, sensing her genuine love for the child. "Of course," he said, carefully transferring Luciana into Alessia's arms.

As Luciana settled against Alessia's chest, her small body relaxed a little more. Alessia cradled her gently, whispering sweet reassurances. "You're safe, Luciana. You're so loved," she cooed, her heart swelling with affection.

For a moment, Luciana seemed to take in the warmth of her new surroundings, her wide green eyes exploring Alessia's gentle face. And then, just as everyone held their breath, the little girl reached back toward Lorenzo, her small arms stretching out.

Lorenzo's heart melted as he stepped forward, gently taking her back into his arms. "I'm right here, bambina," he murmured, feeling

the bond between them grow stronger. "You'll always have me."

Surrounded by his family, Lorenzo knew that Luciana had found her place among them. And as he held her close, he felt a deep sense of hope, knowing that together they would help her heal.

Settling In

[image]

The days that followed Luciana's arrival were a whirlwind of emotions and adjustments. The D'Angelo family worked together to create a welcoming environment for her, each member eager to help her feel safe and loved.

Lorenzo found himself enveloped in a sense of tenderness he hadn't felt in years. The house, which once echoed with the laughter of his growing sons, now filled with the gentle coos and gurgles of a baby girl. The moment they brought Luciana home, they transformed one of the rooms into a cozy nursery, adorned with soft pastel colors and stuffed animals that seemed to smile down at her.

Feeding her was a shared responsibility. Lorenzo marveled at how easily Alessia fell into the role of a nurturing mother. She prepared bottles with care, her hands deftly mixing formula as she hummed soft lullabies. Luciana, still wary but slowly adapting, would watch Alessia with wide eyes, her small fingers occasionally reaching out to touch the warm bottle.

"Here you go, sweetheart," Alessia said softly, cradling Luciana as she fed her. "You're doing so well."

Lorenzo watched, his heart swelling with pride. He had seen his wife nurture their sons with such love, and now he was witnessing that same warmth extended to a child who had known only fear.

Once Luciana finished her bottle, she let out a small sigh, her eyes growing heavy. "I think it's time for a nap," Alessia said, gently rocking her.

Lorenzo nodded, feeling a sense of peace wash over him. "Let's get her settled in."They moved to the nursery, where the crib was adorned with a soft blanket and a mobile that spun gently above. Alessia laid Luciana down, tucking the blanket around her securely. "You're going to have sweet dreams, little princess," she whispered,

brushing a soft kiss against Luciana's forehead.

Once Luciana was asleep, Lorenzo gathered his family in the living room. He took a deep breath, knowing they needed to discuss what had happened. The brothers sat together on the couch, their expressions serious.

"Now that we're all together," Lorenzo began, his voice steady but filled with emotion. "I want to tell you what I found when I went to collect that debt." He paused, gathering his thoughts.

"Luciana was in a closet, hidden away like she was worthless. They had kidnapped her. She was just a baby."

His words hung heavy in the air, the weight of the reality settling in. The brothers exchanged shocked glances, their expressions shifting from concern to anger. "How could anyone do that?" Nico growled, his jaw tightening.

"They'll pay for what they did," Xander added, fists clenching in fury.

Lorenzo nodded. "I had Rocco take care of it. They won't hurt anyone ever again."

Alessia sighed, her heart heavy with grief for Luciana. "We need to think about her future. I want to legally adopt her," she said, her voice resolute. "She deserves a family, a real family."

Everyone nodded in agreement, feeling a shared sense of purpose. "We'll protect her," Leo said, determination clear in his eyes. "No one will ever lay a hand on her again."

Just as the family began to discuss the steps they needed to take for the adoption, a sudden wail echoed from the nursery. The sound was piercing, filled with the kind of distress that made Lorenzo's heart race.

"Luciana!" Alessia exclaimed, standing up quickly.

They rushed to the nursery, where Luciana lay in her crib, tears streaming down her cheeks as she cried hysterically. The sight

broke Lorenzo's heart. He had never seen a baby so frightened, and it felt as though a part of him was shattering alongside her.

"Shh, it's okay, Luciana," Alessia cooed, reaching out for her, but Luciana only cried harder, her tiny body shaking with fear.

Mason and Cassio attempted to comfort her, their voices gentle and soothing, but Luciana's cries only grew louder. "It's alright, little one! We're here!" Cassio said, his voice filled with desperation.

Nico and Xander exchanged worried looks, unsure of what to do. The air was thick with anxiety as they tried everything to calm her down, but nothing seemed to work.

Just then, Lorenzo stepped forward, his heart aching for the little girl. "Let me try," he said, his voice low and steady. As he approached the crib, Luciana's cries intensified, her small hands reaching out in panic.

"Luciana," he whispered, kneeling beside her. "It's me, Daddy. I'm here."

She froze for a moment, her eyes locking onto his, recognition flickering in those beautiful green depths. Slowly, her cries began to subside, and as if sensing his presence, she reached out toward him.

"Come here, bambina," he murmured, scooping her up into his arms. Luciana was still so small, her head resting against his shoulder as she nestled against him, her sobs fading into quiet whimpers.

"Daddy's got you," he whispered, brushing a finger gently along her cheek. "You're safe now. No one will ever hurt you again.

Alessia watched, her heart swelling with gratitude as Luciana calmed in Lorenzo's arms. It was a moment of connection, a testament to the love that was already beginning to bloom within their new family.

As Luciana settled against him, her little hand gripping his shirt, Lorenzo couldn't help but smile.

"Looks like I have a little Daddy's girl," he said, glancing at Alessia with a playful grin.

Alessia chuckled softly. "She definitely has taken to you."

"All of our boys were Mama's boys. Luciana is mine. Right neonata?"

Part of the Family

[image]

The morning sun streamed through the nursery window, casting a soft glow over Luciana as she stirred in her crib. Lorenzo stood by her side, captivated by the tiny girl who had turned his life upside down in such a short time. She was just a baby, yet she carried a weight of trauma that belied her size. He couldn't help but feel a profound sense of responsibility settle over him as he watched her tiny fingers grasping at the air, searching for comfort.

"Morning, princess," he whispered, leaning over to gently lift her from the crib. Luciana blinked sleepily, her green eyes squinting in the bright light. A soft coo escaped her lips, filling Lorenzo's heart with warmth.

He carried her into the kitchen, where the rich aroma of fresh coffee and pancakes filled the air. Alessia was already at the stove, her movements graceful and efficient as she prepared breakfast for the family. The soft sound of sizzling bacon mixed with the light chatter of the boys, who were gathered at the table, their energy palpable as they bantered back and forth.

"Look who's up!" Alessia exclaimed, turning around with a bright smile when she saw Lorenzo enter the room. She wore a soft pink apron that matched the nursery's colors, her blonde hair cascading over her shoulders. Luciana gazed at her with curiosity, yet a hint of uncertainty clouded her expression. As she nestled closer to Lorenzo, Alessia's smile faltered momentarily, but she quickly masked it with reassurance.

"Don't worry, sweetheart," Alessia said gently, kneeling to meet Luciana's gaze. "I'm here to take care of you, too."

Lorenzo could sense Luciana's apprehension. "She just needs some time," he murmured to Alessia, holding Luciana a little tighter. "It's all new to her."

After breakfast, the family went about their day, creating a rhythm that revolved around the newest member. Alessia prepared a warm bath for Luciana, and Lorenzo stood nearby, ready to help. As Alessia gently washed Luciana, Lorenzo was struck by how effortlessly she took to her role as a mother. He watched as Alessia spoke softly to Luciana, telling her stories of the family while treating her like the precious gem she was.

"You're such a little warrior, you know that?" Alessia said, smiling as she rinsed Luciana's hair, droplets of water cascading down her little face. "You've already overcome so much."

Once Luciana was bathed and dressed in a soft onesie adorned with little stars, Lorenzo took his turn to feed her. He settled onto the couch, propping himself up with pillows while Luciana nuzzled into him, her small hands grasping the bottle as he held it. The bond between them deepened with every bottle, every coo, and every shared moment. He found himself marveling at the way she looked at him, her eyes wide with innocence, slowly beginning to trust the man who had saved her.

As the day went on, the boys began to trickle in and out of the living room, drawn by the sounds of baby chatter and the soothing atmosphere. Nico, the eldest, walked in first, towering over the rest with his broad shoulders and warm demeanor. "Hey there, little one!" he said, crouching down to her level. "I'm your big brother. I'm going to teach you all the best things." He gave her a playful wink, making her giggle, and the sound sent a ripple of joy through Lorenzo's heart.

Xander stepped up next, flashing a charming smile. "I've got some fun games lined up for when you're a bit older. You're going to be the coolest little sister ever." His excitement was contagious, and Luciana gazed at him, curiosity brightening her eyes.

As the brothers gathered around, they each took turns introducing themselves. Leo, the second youngest, bent down with a playful grin. "And I'm Leo! I'll be your go-to guy for any adventure you want to go on," he said, extending his hand as if offering a secret handshake.

Mason and Cassio lingered nearby, their expressions softening as they took in the sight of their father and baby sister. "So, what's the plan for her?" Mason asked, curiosity glinting in his hazel eyes.

"We're thinking about legally adopting her," Lorenzo replied, pride swelling in his chest. "She deserves to have our last name, to be part of this family."

Cassio nodded. "Absolutely. She's one of us now." The boys shared a look, a silent understanding passing between them. They had all felt the weight of Luciana's arrival in different ways, but they were united in their determination to protect her.

As the sun began to set, casting a warm glow over the room, Luciana grew tired. Lorenzo noticed her eyelids drooping, her little body swaying in his arms. "I think it's time for bed, bambina," he whispered, carrying her back to the nursery.

Alessia followed closely behind, tucking Luciana into her crib and covering her with a soft blanket. "Sweet dreams, princess," she murmured, planting a soft kiss on Luciana's forehead. Lorenzo lingered by the crib, watching as Luciana's breathing slowed and her tiny hands relaxed against her chest.
As the evening unfolded, the family settled in the living room, sharing laughter and stories. Lorenzo found himself enveloped in a sense of belonging that he hadn't felt in years. The boys cracked jokes about their childhood escapades, their voices echoing through the room, while Alessia added her own anecdotes, filling the atmosphere with love and camaraderie.

"Remember when we tried to build that treehouse?" Leo laughed, his eyes bright with nostalgia. "And it almost collapsed on us?"

"Yeah! And you insisted we could do it without the instructions," Nico said, shaking his head.

"We nearly gave Dad a heart attack."

As they reminisced, Lorenzo felt a profound gratitude for the family he had created. His heart swelled with pride knowing that they were all willing to embrace Luciana, to welcome her into their fold

without hesitation.

As night fell, the boys reluctantly headed to bed, their laughter fading into the quiet of the house. Alessia and Lorenzo lingered in the living room, stealing moments to enjoy each other's company.

"You know," Alessia said, breaking the comfortable silence, "I've never seen you look so... happy. It's like she's brought something out in you."

Lorenzo nodded, contemplating her words. "It's true. It's not just the joy of having a daughter; it's the feeling of being a protector again. It's something I thought I'd lost with the boys growing up."

Alessia reached for his hand, giving it a gentle squeeze. "You're going to be an amazing father to her, just like you've been to our sons."

Lorenzo smiled, his heart swelling with love. "And you, Alessia, are going to be the best mother."

As they shared a quiet moment together, a sense of hope filled the room. They knew that the road ahead would be filled with challenges, but they were ready to face them together. With Luciana in their lives, their family had grown stronger, more united.

The promise of tomorrow filled the air, and Lorenzo couldn't help but feel that their future was bright. He glanced back at the nursery, where Luciana lay peacefully asleep, and he made a silent vow to protect her, to give her the love and security she so desperately needed.

With a heart full of determination, he turned back to Alessia, ready to face whatever came their way. "We're going to make this work, Alessia. No matter what it takes, we'll give her everything she deserves."

Alessia nodded, her eyes filled with love. "Together."

Family Ties

[image]

The following morning was bright and promising, sunlight spilling into the nursery as Luciana awoke to the gentle sounds of birds chirping outside her window. Lorenzo had already been up for a while, brewing coffee and preparing breakfast for the family, but he couldn't resist peeking into her room one more time before starting the day.

He found Luciana wide-eyed and alert, her little hands grasping at the bars of her crib. As he leaned over, she broke into a radiant smile, and his heart swelled at the sight. "Good morning, princess," he said softly, lifting her into his arms.

"Good morning, Daddy," he added, testing the new title that felt so right on his tongue. Luciana gazed up at him, her eyes sparkling with innocence, and he felt a deep connection to her, as if they had always been meant to be together.

After a hearty breakfast, where the boys eagerly competed to entertain Luciana with silly faces and exaggerated gestures, Alessia joined them with a bright smile. "I have some exciting news!" she announced, gathering everyone's attention.

"What is it?" Xander asked, his curiosity piqued.

"Your grandparents are coming over to meet Luciana!" Alessia declared, her eyes gleaming with excitement. "And they'll bring your cousins along. It's been too long since everyone was together."

Lorenzo felt a rush of mixed emotions. His parents, Giovanni and Rosa D'Angelo, had always been loving but traditional, especially when it came to family. He could already imagine their excitement at the arrival of a granddaughter, particularly since she was the first girl born into the D'Angelo family in six generations.

"Wow, that's huge!" Nico said, a grin spreading across his face.

"They're going to be thrilled. When are they coming?"

"Later this afternoon," Alessia replied, glancing at the clock. "I'll prepare some snacks and make sure the house is ready."

As they discussed preparations, Lorenzo felt a wave of nostalgia wash over him. He remembered how much his parents had longed for a granddaughter, especially his mother, Rosa, who often expressed her desire for a little girl to spoil. It was as if the universe had finally answered their prayers, and now Luciana would bring a new legacy to the family—a fresh start in a world that had often felt dark and unforgiving.

After some playful banter and laughter, the boys decided to take Luciana for a stroll in her new stroller, carefully pushing her around the yard. Lorenzo watched, feeling a mixture of pride and protectiveness. He admired how the boys were already so invested in Luciana's well-being, each of them vying for her attention while trying to make her giggle.

"Look, Luciana! The flowers are blooming!" Leo exclaimed, pointing to a cluster of vibrant blossoms lining the pathway. Luciana's eyes widened, her curiosity piqued, but just as quickly, her expression shifted to one of uncertainty when she realized her surroundings had changed.

She whimpered softly, instinctively reaching for Lorenzo. He rushed to her side, lifting her out of the stroller. "It's okay, my love," he soothed, cradling her against his chest. "You're safe with me."

As the hours passed, the anticipation in the house grew. Alessia moved around the kitchen, preparing treats for their guests while Lorenzo checked on Luciana, who had fallen asleep in his arms. He felt a sense of calm as he watched her little chest rise and fall, a reminder of how far she had come and how much love surrounded her now.

Finally, the time arrived. The doorbell rang, and Lorenzo felt a jolt of excitement course through him. "They're here!" he called out, moving to open the door.

As he swung it open, his parents stood there, beaming with joy. Giovanni, tall and robust, with silver hair and a warm smile, was followed closely by Rosa, her eyes sparkling with excitement. "There's my son!" she exclaimed, stepping in to wrap her arms around him in a warm embrace.

Lorenzo returned the hug, feeling the familiar comfort of his mother's affection. "It's good to see you, Mom. You're going to love her."

As Lorenzo led them to the living room, the boys quickly gathered around, eager to introduce Luciana. When they reached the room, the sight of the sleeping baby filled Rosa's heart with joy. "Oh, she's beautiful!" she cooed, kneeling beside the stroller.

But as soon as Luciana stirred awake and caught sight of the new faces, her expression shifted to one of fear. She whimpered, her tiny hands reaching for Lorenzo. It broke his heart to see her so scared.

"Hey there, sweet girl," Rosa said softly, her voice laced with tenderness. "I'm your Nonna. You're going to have the best life here."

But Luciana only clung tighter to Lorenzo, burying her face against his chest. He could feel her tiny heart racing, and he rubbed her back soothingly. "You're okay, baby. You're safe with me," he whispered, holding her close as he stepped forward to introduce her.

"Mom, Dad, this is Luciana. She's our little girl," he said, looking down at her as she peeked out from his embrace, still apprehensive.

"She's so precious," Giovanni said, his voice gentle. "It's okay, little one. We love you already." As the cousins arrived, their energy filled the room, but Luciana remained still, her wide eyes darting between the strangers. The older cousins rushed over, eager to greet her, but as they approached, she let out a frightened whimper, burying her face deeper into Lorenzo's chest.

"Luciana, it's okay. They just want to say hello," Lorenzo reassured her. "You can trust them."

However, Luciana's fear of new people didn't fade, and she whimpered again, only calming down when Lorenzo drew her closer, cradling her in his arms. He could feel the love and concern from his family, but he also understood Luciana's hesitation. "She's been through a lot, and it's going to take time for her to feel safe with everyone," he explained, his voice soft but firm.

"She needs to know that you're her safe place, Lorenzo," Alessia added, her eyes reflecting the understanding and compassion they all felt for the little girl.

After a while, as the family settled in and began to chat among themselves, Lorenzo made sure to stay close to Luciana, whispering soothing words to her. Slowly, with every gentle stroke of her hair and soft kiss to her forehead, she began to relax, glancing at his family with wary curiosity.

Rosa, sensing the tension, began sharing stories from her childhood, her warm laughter filling the room. The boys joined in, sharing silly anecdotes that had everyone chuckling. Despite her initial fear, Luciana's wide eyes sparkled with interest as she listened, momentarily distracted by the sound of laughter and the love that surrounded her.

As the evening wore on, the D'Angelo home was filled with warmth, laughter, and the joyous sounds of family reconnecting. The boys took turns trying to engage her, but she remained glued to Lorenzo, her comfort zone.

Finally, as the sun began to set, casting golden hues across the sky, Lorenzo found himself sitting in the living room with his family. Luciana lay peacefully in his arms, her tiny fingers curling around his thumb, a sweet reminder of the bond they had formed in such a short time.

"Welcome to the family, Luciana," he whispered softly, leaning down to kiss her forehead, knowing that her journey was just beginning—and that he would always be there to guide her every step of the way.

Just then, as if sensing the affection surrounding her, Luciana let

out a tiny gurgle and stretched her arms, reaching back toward Lorenzo. The gesture melted his heart, solidifying the bond they had formed. He chuckled softly, "See? She knows who her daddy is already."

"Looks like you have a daddy's girl," Xander teased, nudging his brothers.

"Well, she's lucky because I was always a mama's boy," Nico quipped, earning a playful shove from Lorenzo.

As they all laughed together, Lorenzo knew that while Luciana was still finding her place in this new family, she was beginning to understand that she was safe, loved, and surrounded by those who would always protect her.

New Priority

[image]

In the early light of the new day, Lorenzo and Alessia officially signed the adoption papers, their hearts brimming with love as they named their daughter Luciana Marie D'Angelo. The weight of the moment pressed upon them, but it was a beautiful promise to the little girl who had already captured their hearts. As they held the papers, confirming her place in their family, they felt a renewed sense of purpose to protect her at all costs.

Once the papers were signed, Lorenzo called his family together for a meeting in the expansive living room. The soft morning light streamed through the large windows, illuminating Luciana, who lay nestled in her crib, the sunlight casting a warm glow around her and making her look like the little angel she was.

"Everyone, we need to discuss Luciana's arrival," Lorenzo said, his voice steady but filled with authority. The boys looked up, a mix of curiosity and seriousness in their expressions. It was clear that this was no ordinary family meeting.

"Word is going to spread quickly about her," Lorenzo continued, pacing the room. "And with the mafia's eyes everywhere, we can't afford any mistakes. I want to make sure she is our top priority, no matter what."

Nico leaned forward, his brows furrowing with concern. "What do you mean? You think someone might come after her?"

"I don't want to take any chances. She's a D'Angelo now, and that means there are people who would see her as a target—either to get to us or to make a statement," Lorenzo explained, the gravity of the situation settling over them like a heavy blanket. "We need to up our security measures."

Xander nodded, his hazel eyes serious. "I can coordinate with Rocco and the guys to set up a perimeter around the house. We'll keep

watch and make sure there's no one suspicious hanging around."

"Good," Lorenzo replied, grateful for the support of his sons. "And I want our best men stationed at all entrances. They should be on high alert, and I want them to know that if anyone tries to come near Luciana, they'll have to answer to me."

"Absolutely," Leo added, his expression steely. "We'll make sure she's safe. She's family now."

As they discussed the specifics, Alessia entered the room, cradling Luciana in her arms. The baby's bright green eyes peered out, taking in her surroundings with wide-eyed wonder. "What's going on?" she asked, sensing the seriousness in the air.

"We're just discussing security measures for Luciana," Lorenzo replied, stepping closer to Alessia. "We can't let anything happen to her."

Alessia nodded, her heart swelling with love and concern for their new daughter. "I'll make sure to keep her close. We should also think about having her monitored when we take her out. It's a big world out there, and she'll need extra protection until she's used to everything."

"Exactly," Lorenzo said, appreciating her insight. "It's essential that she grows up knowing she's safe and loved. It's going to be a big adjustment for her, and we need to be there for her every step of the way."

He turned to the boys, who nodded in agreement. "It's settled then. I'll call a meeting with the Capos and inform them that Luciana is our number one priority. Anyone who doesn't respect that will have to answer to me," he stated firmly.

With the plan set, they gathered around the dining table, discussing the finer details of the security arrangements. Each brother took on a specific role, dividing responsibilities like they always had when it came to family matters.

As they spoke, Lorenzo couldn't help but glance at Luciana, who

was now playing with a colorful rattle in Alessia's arms, cooing and gurgling as if she sensed the importance of the moment. The sight of her brought a sense of determination to his heart. He would protect her at all costs.

After a thorough discussion, they agreed to have a trusted team of guards monitoring the property around the clock. Rocco, Lorenzo's right-hand man, would oversee the security measures and report directly to him. He would ensure that every inch of their estate was covered, leaving no room for error.

As the meeting came to a close, Lorenzo gathered his family for a moment of unity. "Luciana is our future. We must show her the strength of our family and the safety that comes with being a D'Angelo. She's been through enough, and she deserves a life filled with love and security."

Nico stepped forward, placing a reassuring hand on his father's shoulder. "We've got her back, Dad. No one will harm her. I promise."

The room filled with a renewed sense of purpose, and as they prepared to carry out their plans, Lorenzo felt a fierce protectiveness wash over him. His family was stronger together, and with Luciana at the center, they would create a fortress of love around her.

Later that day, Lorenzo arranged for a meeting with the Capos of the family, a group of men he respected but also knew were fiercely loyal. He gathered them in the expansive dining room, where the atmosphere was charged with anticipation.

"Gentlemen," he began, his tone commanding attention, "I've called you here today for an important announcement." The room fell silent, every eye on him. "As many of you know, I recently brought home my daughter, Luciana Marie D'Angelo. She is now a part of this family, and I want you all to understand that her safety is our top priority."

A murmur of surprise rippled through the group, but Lorenzo raised a hand to quiet them. "She is the first girl born into the D'Angelo

family in six generations. This is a momentous occasion, and we will protect her as we would each other."

Giovanni, one of the older Capos, nodded, his expression serious. "Of course, Lorenzo. We will ensure her safety. She'll be treated like a princess among us."

"Anyone who disrespects that or threatens her will answer to me," Lorenzo added, his gaze piercing. "I want constant surveillance around the house, and anyone who approaches the property without my permission will be dealt with accordingly."

"Understood," Rocco replied, a sense of authority in his voice. "We'll set up a detailed security protocol to ensure she's never out of our sight."

As the meeting concluded, Lorenzo felt a sense of relief. He knew that with the support of his family and the loyalty of the Capos, Luciana would be safe.

Returning home, Lorenzo found Luciana napping peacefully, a sweet smile on her face. He knelt beside her crib, his heart swelling with love. "You're surrounded by a family that loves you, little princess," he whispered. "And I promise to keep you safe."

He couldn't help but recall the challenges she had already faced in her short life and felt a fierce determination swell within him. He would do everything in his power to shield her from harm, to create a world where she could thrive without fear.

As the sun began to set, bathing the room in a warm, golden glow, Alessia joined him, placing a gentle hand on his shoulder. "She's so precious, Lorenzo," she said softly, her eyes sparkling with love. "We're lucky to have her."

Lorenzo turned to her, his expression serious yet softening as he looked at his wife. "We're going to make sure she knows she's safe and loved. I want her to grow up in a home filled with joy and laughter."

"Absolutely," Alessia replied, her heart full. "And we'll make sure

our family keeps her close. She deserves that."

As night fell, the house transformed into a sanctuary, filled with the sounds of laughter and the warmth of family. Lorenzo gathered the boys, sharing stories of their own childhood, reminding them of the importance of sticking together as a family.

Later, as Luciana slept soundly, Lorenzo looked around at his family, feeling a deep sense of gratitude. They were united in their purpose, bound by love and loyalty. Together, they would protect their little princess and create a legacy that would stand the test of time.

The Rising Threat

[image]

The D'Angelo estate was unusually quiet in the days following Luciana's official adoption. The calm was unsettling for Lorenzo, whose life in the mafia had taught him that silence often preceded chaos. His thoughts were consumed by the responsibility of protecting his newly adopted daughter, a feeling that had once been familiar but forgotten over the years. Holding Luciana reminded him of when his boys were infants—those sleepless nights filled with crying, feeding, and care. Yet with Luciana, it was different. She was his princess, the daughter he never had, and his protective instincts were even fiercer.

Late one evening, Lorenzo sat in his study, reviewing business reports. His thoughts were split between running his empire and ensuring Luciana's safety. The weight of his responsibilities was heavy, but thoughts of Luciana brought a strange sense of peace. Upstairs, she slept in her crib, safe for the moment, but the looming threats kept him on edge.

A sharp knock at the door broke his focus. Rocco entered with a grim expression. Lorenzo immediately sensed bad news.

"We've got a problem," Rocco began, his voice low. "The Russians are making moves again, sniffing around our territory. Worse, they know about Luciana."

Lorenzo's heart sank, a dangerous coldness creeping into his expression. "They know about her?" he asked, his voice low and controlled, though the anger simmered beneath the surface.

Rocco nodded. "They're talking. They think you've gone soft, that having her is a weakness they can exploit."

Lorenzo's jaw tightened, his knuckles white as he gripped the armrests of his chair. "Luciana is off-limits. Anyone who even thinks of using her will regret it."

"They might already have a rat on the inside," Rocco continued cautiously. "That's the only way they'd know so much."

Lorenzo's eyes darkened, the thought of a traitor within his ranks fueling his rage. A rat was the last thing he needed, especially now, with Luciana's life at risk. "If there's a rat, I'll find them. And I'll handle it personally."

Rocco nodded. "We need to double security—more men, more eyes on the house. We can't afford any mistakes."

"Do it," Lorenzo ordered. "And find out who's feeding them information. No one betrays this family and walks away alive."

As Rocco left, Lorenzo remained seated, seething in silence. The thought of the Russians targeting Luciana made his blood boil. The idea of a rat in his ranks only deepened his fury. But just as his anger reached its peak, the door opened again—this time, it was Alessia, cradling Luciana in her arms.

"She woke up," Alessia said softly, stepping into the room. Luciana looked around, her big green eyes wide with curiosity. When her gaze landed on Lorenzo, she reached out her tiny arms for him.

Lorenzo's heart softened at the sight of her. He stood and gently took Luciana from Alessia, cradling the tiny girl against his chest. Despite the storm raging in his mind, the second Luciana was in his arms, the tension began to melt away. Her soft coos, the way she snuggled into him—it was enough to quiet his anger, at least for a moment.

"She was restless," Alessia said, watching the way Luciana calmed instantly in her husband's arms. "Couldn't get her to settle down."

Lorenzo smiled down at Luciana, his large hand gently stroking her light brown hair. "You're safe now, princess," he whispered softly to her, pressing a kiss to her forehead. The world outside his door might have been filled with threats, but in this moment, nothing mattered except her.

Alessia came to stand beside him, her hand resting gently on his

arm. "She's starting to feel more comfortable here," Alessia noted, though her eyes reflected the same worry Lorenzo felt. "But she's still scared of everyone else."

Lorenzo nodded, his gaze fixed on the little girl in his arms. "It'll take time. She's been through hell." His voice hardened slightly, the fury from earlier still bubbling under the surface. "But no one will ever hurt her again."

Luciana stirred in his arms, her tiny fingers gripping his shirt as she snuggled closer to him. Even as the weight of the looming threats pressed on his shoulders, Luciana had a way of making the world feel bearable. The potential of a rat within his organization was an infuriating thought, but holding her reminded him of why he fought so hard in the first place.

A small smile tugged at the corner of Lorenzo's lips as he looked down at his daughter. No matter how chaotic his world became, Luciana was his light.

"I'll head back up with her," Alessia said softly, brushing her hand gently over Luciana's cheek. But as soon as Alessia moved to take Luciana back, the baby girl whimpered, her arms clutching Lorenzo even tighter.

Alessia chuckled softly, her blue eyes meeting Lorenzo's. "Seems like she's quite the daddy's girl."

Lorenzo grinned, his chest swelling with a warmth he hadn't felt in years. "All the boys were mamma's boys," he said, amused by the contrast. "But this one... she's mine."A

lessia smiled softly, watching the way Luciana clung to him, clearly feeling safest in her father's arms. "She knows you'll protect her."

Lorenzo gave a small nod, though the weight of that truth hung heavily on him. He would protect her. At all costs.

Later that night, after discussing business with Rocco and sending a flurry of orders to tighten security, Lorenzo headed upstairs to his bedroom. The house was quiet now, with guards posted around the

estate. He opened the door to the master suite, his eyes immediately drawn to the small crib beside their bed where Luciana was sleeping soundly.

Her tiny form was peaceful, her soft breathing filling the room with a sense of calm. Lorenzo walked over quietly, standing by her crib as he watched her sleep. Her little fists were curled under her chin, her soft hair spread across the pillow. She looked so serene, so safe, and the sight of her brought a smile to Lorenzo's face.

For a moment, everything seemed right in the world. But as he turned away from the crib and made his way to the bed, that smile quickly hardened into a scowl. The rat. The threat from the Russians. The looming danger surrounding them. His fury bubbled to the surface again, the weight of protecting Luciana more intense than ever.

He would ensure no harm came to her—no matter what.

Mamma

[image]

Alessia stood at the window of the master suite, gazing out into the vast, moonlit gardens of the D'Angelo estate. The familiar sights of home—the manicured lawns, the tall trees swaying in the soft breeze—were comforting, yet tonight, her thoughts wandered far from the usual tranquility she found in this view. Life had changed drastically since Luciana arrived, and the transformation was both wonderful and overwhelming.

The house, once dominated by the energetic presence of her five sons, now had a new heartbeat—a tiny, delicate presence that shifted everything. Luciana had been with them for only a short time, but it felt as though she had been part of their lives forever. Alessia's heart swelled with love each time she thought of the little girl who now slept peacefully in her crib beside their bed.

A daughter. Alessia had waited so long for this—dreamed of it in quiet moments over the years. Though she adored her boys, a piece of her had always yearned for a girl, someone she could dress in pretty clothes, share secrets with, and pass on her traditions to. Luciana had filled that void in a way that Alessia hadn't realized was possible. She wasn't just another child to care for—

Luciana was the missing piece of their family.

But Luciana's arrival had not been without challenges. The baby girl, only four months old, had endured more hardship than anyone should ever have to face. Kidnapped by cruel strangers, neglected, and abused, Luciana had been through a nightmare before finding safety with the D'Angelos. Even now, Alessia could still feel the sting of her initial fears—Luciana's tiny, fragile body stiffening whenever someone unfamiliar approached, her wide, green eyes filled with terror.

The fear was still there, though it had begun to ease. Alessia had been patient, letting Luciana come to her in her own time. Lorenzo

had formed an instant bond with their daughter—he had that effect on people. Strong, steady, protective. Luciana trusted him implicitly, and it had warmed Alessia's heart to see her husband embrace his role as Luciana's father with such tenderness. But Alessia had taken a slower, more careful approach, giving Luciana the space she needed to feel safe with her.

And gradually, it had worked.

In the quiet moments, when Luciana allowed herself to rest against Alessia's chest, or when her tiny hands reached out during feedings, Alessia could feel their connection growing. It was subtle, but unmistakable. Luciana was starting to understand that she had a mother now—a mother who would love her unconditionally, protect her fiercely, and never let her feel alone or unloved again.

Alessia turned her gaze toward the crib, watching as Luciana shifted slightly in her sleep, her tiny fists curled under her chin. She looked so peaceful, so perfect, that it was almost hard to believe the suffering she had endured. Alessia's heart ached at the thought of what could have happened to Luciana if Lorenzo hadn't found her, hidden away in that terrible place. She shuddered to think of the life Luciana had been spared from—the cruelty, the neglect. Now, she would know only love and protection.

Alessia moved quietly across the room, her bare feet silent against the polished wood floor. She leaned over the crib, her fingers gently brushing a strand of Luciana's soft hair away from her face. Her touch was light, almost reverent, as though she was afraid to disturb the baby's peaceful slumber. Every time Alessia looked at Luciana, she felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude—for the chance to be her mother, to raise her, to give her a life filled with happiness and security.

A soft creak of the floorboards behind her signaled Lorenzo's presence. Alessia turned slightly, catching sight of him in the dim light of the room. He had just finished a long conversation with Rocco about tightening security around the estate, and she could see the weight of the day's concerns etched into his features. But as his eyes met hers, and then shifted to Luciana, a softness washed over his expression.

"She's perfect," Alessia whispered, her voice barely above a breath as she gazed back down at their daughter.

Lorenzo came to stand beside her, his large hand resting on the edge of the crib as he looked down at Luciana. "She is," he agreed, his voice warm but low. He was always quiet around

Luciana, as though afraid to disturb the fragile peace she brought with her.

Alessia could sense the tension in him—despite the tenderness he showed with Luciana, the weight of his responsibilities was ever-present. The threat from the Russians, the possibility of a rat within their ranks—it all hung over him like a dark cloud. She knew Lorenzo well enough to see the worry in his eyes, even when he tried to hide it from her.

"She's lucky to have you," Alessia murmured, her hand slipping into his, offering the quiet support that had always been part of their relationship. "She knows you'll protect her."

Lorenzo's gaze lingered on Luciana for a moment longer, his face softening before he spoke. "She's changed everything," he said, his voice deep and thoughtful. "I've never felt this way before—not with the boys. This is different."

Alessia smiled at that. "She's your princess," she teased lightly. "And you never had a daughter to spoil before."

Lorenzo chuckled softly, though the sound was more weary than amused. "She's definitely a daddy's girl," he admitted, his thumb gently rubbing the back of Alessia's hand. "But I've noticed she's getting more comfortable with you."

Alessia nodded, her heart swelling at the thought. "It's taken time, but she's starting to trust me." She paused, glancing up at him. "I always wanted a daughter, Lorenzo. I didn't realize how much until now."

Lorenzo looked down at her, his eyes softening in that way they only did for her and their children. "And she couldn't have a better

mother."

They stood together for a while longer, watching over Luciana as she slept, the quiet of the night wrapping around them like a blanket. Alessia knew that the road ahead would not be easy—the dangers of their world were very real, and the threats surrounding them were growing. But for now, in this peaceful moment, she allowed herself to simply be a mother. To revel in the love she had for her daughter, for her family.

Luciana had brought light back into their home, and Alessia was determined to keep that light shining, no matter what it took.

The Addition

[image]

Nico

Nico stood at the doorway of the nursery, his large frame casting a long shadow across the room as he gazed at Luciana, who was peacefully napping in her crib. It was still strange to think of himself as an older brother to such a tiny, fragile thing. He had grown up as the eldest of five, the one who had always been expected to lead, protect, and set the example for his younger brothers. Now, at 24, with his own life and responsibilities in the family business, he had never imagined he'd have a baby sister.

Luciana was a miracle, really. She had come into their lives in a way none of them could have predicted, but it hadn't taken long for Nico to fall into the role of protector. That's what he had always been, after all. The eldest. The one who looked out for his family, no matter what.

But with Luciana, it was different. Nico wasn't just protecting her because it was expected of him—he wanted to. The moment he had first laid eyes on her, so small and scared in their father's arms, something had shifted inside him. He had felt a fierce, almost primal need to keep her safe, to ensure that no one would ever hurt her again.

His hands clenched into fists at the thought of the couple who had kidnapped and abused her. When Lorenzo had told them the full story, Nico had been livid. He wanted nothing more than to track those monsters down and make them pay, but Rocco had already handled it. Still, the anger lingered. Nico hated the thought of anyone laying a finger on Luciana, let alone someone who had treated her so cruelly.

As he watched her sleep now, he felt a pang of something deeper—an emotion he wasn't used to feeling. Nico had never been one to show much vulnerability. He had learned to hide his emotions

behind a wall of stoicism, especially in their line of work. But with Luciana, all of that seemed to crumble. She made him feel... softer. Like he had a part of himself he didn't need to guard so fiercely.

"She's gonna grow up spoiled with all of us around," he muttered to himself, though the thought made him smile.

Luciana had brought something new into their home, a lightness that Nico hadn't realized they needed. The house had always been filled with energy—his brothers were rambunctious and loud, and their father's presence commanded respect. But now, with Luciana here, there was something else. A softness, a gentleness that only a baby girl could bring.

Nico wasn't sure how he would handle it when she got older—when she started to become more independent. The idea of any guy trying to get close to her made his blood boil, and she wasn't even old enough to sit up yet. He would have to figure out how to balance being her protector without smothering her. For now, though, he was content just to watch over her, knowing she was safe.

Because as long as he was around, no one would ever hurt Luciana again.

Xander

Xander leaned against the doorframe, his arms crossed over his chest as he watched Luciana sleep. His hazel eyes softened as they rested on her small form, the rhythmic rise and fall of her chest bringing a sense of calm to his normally turbulent mind. At 21, Xander was the quiet one of the family. While his brothers tended to be more vocal and boisterous, Xander preferred to observe from the sidelines, taking everything in before making a move.

Luciana's arrival had been unexpected, but not unwelcome. From the moment his father had brought her home, Xander had felt something shift within him. It wasn't that he didn't care about his family—he loved his brothers and respected his parents deeply—but with Luciana, it was different. There was something about her vulnerability, her innocence, that tugged at a part of him he hadn't known existed.

He had always been the protector of his own emotions, keeping his feelings bottled up and hidden from the world. But with Luciana, he found it harder to keep those walls up. Every time she looked at him with those wide green eyes, Xander felt something inside him soften. She was scared of new people, especially anyone who wasn't Lorenzo or Alessia, but Xander didn't mind.

He wasn't in a hurry to win her over. He would wait, just as he always did, until she felt comfortable enough to trust him.

Xander had always been good at waiting.

It was strange, though, the way Luciana had made him think about the future. He had never really considered what it would be like to have a family of his own. The mafia life wasn't exactly conducive to settling down, and Xander had never been the type to think about marriage or kids. But now, with Luciana in the house, he found himself imagining what it would be like to have children. Not right away, of course—he was only 21—but someday.

He wondered if he would ever be able to love anyone as fiercely as he already loved Luciana. The thought surprised him. He had never been the sentimental type, but something about having a little sister had changed that.

Luciana stirred slightly in her sleep, her tiny hand twitching as though she was reaching for something. Xander's heart ached at the sight. He had always been the strong, silent type, but around her, he felt like he needed to be more than that. She deserved to know how much she was loved, how much she meant to them.

Xander took a deep breath, feeling the weight of his responsibility settle in. Luciana had come into their lives unexpectedly, but she was part of their family now. And Xander would do whatever it took to keep her safe.

Leo

Leo paced the hallway outside the nursery, his mind racing. At 20, he was the joker of the family, always quick with a sarcastic comment or a joke to lighten the mood. But ever since Luciana had

arrived, he found it harder to be his usual self. It wasn't that he didn't still have a sense of humor—he did, and his brothers still rolled their eyes at his jokes—but Luciana had made him feel... different.

For the first time in his life, Leo found himself speechless around someone. Not because he didn't know what to say, but because Luciana's presence made him feel things he wasn't used to feeling. He had always been the carefree one, the brother who never took anything too seriously. But now, with Luciana around, he felt a deep sense of responsibility. She was so small, so fragile, and Leo couldn't bear the thought of anything happening to her.

He had never been the protective type—at least, not as much as Nico or Xander. But something about Luciana brought out that side of him. Maybe it was the way she clung to their father, or the way her tiny face scrunched up in fear whenever someone new entered the room. She had been through so much already, and Leo wanted to do everything in his power to make sure she never had to feel that kind of fear again.

Leo had always used humor as a defense mechanism, a way to deflect from the seriousness of their lives. But with Luciana, he found himself being more serious than he had ever been before. He still joked around with his brothers, of course, but when it came to her, all he wanted to do was protect her.

"I never thought I'd be such a softie," Leo muttered to himself, shaking his head. But it wasn't a bad feeling. In fact, it felt good to care so deeply about someone, to know that he would do anything for her.

Luciana had brought out a side of him that he hadn't known existed, and Leo was determined to be the best big brother she could have.

Mason

Mason sat on the edge of his bed, staring at the ceiling. He had always been the overthinker of the family, the one who analyzed every situation from every possible angle before making a decision. It drove his brothers crazy sometimes, but that was just how Mason

was wired. He couldn't help it.

Since Luciana had arrived, Mason's mind had been racing even more than usual. He couldn't stop thinking about how she had ended up with them, how his father had found her hidden away in that horrible place. It made him sick to his stomach to think about what she had been through, and even sicker to think about how close she had come to an even worse fate.

He had always been protective of his brothers, especially Cassio, his twin. But with Luciana, it was different. She was so helpless, so innocent, and Mason couldn't help but feel an overwhelming sense of responsibility for her.

But along with that responsibility came fear. What if they couldn't protect her? What if the people who had hurt her came back for her? What if someone else tried to take her away?

Mason shook his head, trying to push the thoughts away. He knew he couldn't let his fears consume him, but it was hard. He had always been the type to worry about the worst-case scenario, and now, with Luciana in their lives, those worries had only intensified.

He loved her already, though. He hadn't expected to, not so quickly. But from the moment he had laid eyes on her,

Mason had felt a connection to her. Maybe it was because they were both the youngest—she was the baby of the family now, just like he and Cassio had been for so long. Or maybe it was because she was so vulnerable, and Mason had always been drawn to protect those who couldn't protect themselves.

Whatever the reason, Mason knew one thing for sure: he would do anything to keep her safe.

Cassio

Cassio sat in the rocking chair beside Luciana's crib, watching as she slept. He had always been the sensitive one, the one who felt things more deeply than his brothers. It wasn't that they didn't care—they did, in their own ways—but Cassio had always been more in tune

with his emotions. And right now, all he felt was love for the tiny girl who had come into their lives.

At 19, Cassio had never really thought about having a baby sister. He had been content being one of the youngest, always protected by his older brothers. But now, with Luciana here, he felt a new kind of responsibility—a need to protect her, to make sure she knew she was loved.

Cassio had always been able to sense what others were feeling, and with Luciana, it was no different. He could feel her fear, her anxiety, her uncertainty. She had been through so much in her short life, and it broke his heart to think about it.

But he could also sense her trust, her growing bond with their family. She was starting to feel safe with them, starting to understand that she was loved and cared for. And that made Cassio's heart swell with pride.

He knew it wouldn't be easy—Luciana had a long road ahead of her, and there would be challenges along the way. But Cassio was ready for it. He would be there for her, no matter what.

As he watched her sleep, a soft smile tugged at the corners of his lips. She was their little princess, and Cassio would do everything in his power to make sure she always felt like one.